

The Revival at Kengtung



TWO YOUNG KWE COUPLES

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THE widespread movement among the hill tribes of northeastern Burma and the borders of China seems to be gathering momentum with the passing months, and already is recognized as one of almost unparalleled significance in modern missionary experience. Such are the demands upon the time and strength of the workers that they find it well nigh impossible to send adequate reports of what is going on. The accompanying letter from Rev. W. M. Young, however, is a stirring supplement to the leaflet entitled "Cutting the Cords," and furnishes abundant cause for praise to God, increased earnestness in prayer, and generous contributions, that the reinforcements for this white harvest field may be suitably sustained.

EVANGELISTIC TOURING

Early in the year (1905) I sent three men north into China and the Wa country on an evangelistic tour, and to gather fuller information regarding the Was and the Muhsos in China. A little later, two men went on a long tour to the extreme southwestern part of this state and into the adjoining Shan State, whence they were to return along the southern boundary of Kengtung. About the same time a large group of Kwes came in from the east, representing a number of villages in that direction. When they returned, our strongest native helper went with them and made a tour of six weeks among their villages.

A SOUL STIRRING REPORT

The last day of March, a part of the group sent to the north returned, and a day later the remainder of the party, accompanied by a large delegation from the districts they had visited. Their report of the great open door in the Wa country was the most soul stirring of anything in the history of the work here. If true, it will constitute one of the marvels of modern missions. The Was have been known as the wildest tribe of Burma and southwest China. About three years

ago one of their number who had traveled considerably and who had heartily accepted the Muhso traditions with which he had become familiar went back to his own people, to whom he became a sort of prophet. The result is that many thousands who were "head hunters" a few years ago, have now given up that practise and are in the same attitude as the Muhsos, intensely longing for the foreigner who shall bring them the knowledge of the true God. They seem very much in earnest. The leader has sent several delegations to Kengtung, a distance of over twenty days' journey, to learn more of the truth. He has also sent presents of ponies, with the earnest request that we visit his people at once; or, in case we cannot come so far now, that we come about half-way, and hundreds will meet us there. It is impossible this year, but early next year we hope to go and take other missionaries with us.

HUNDREDS OF VISITORS

The men who had gone to the southwest returned after six weeks, with a most encouraging report of the vast field open there. Mr. Ba Te* also came back from a six weeks' tour to the east, with a similar story. On the next day a group of 155 Kwes, whom Mr. Ba Te had gathered on his tour, arrived on our compound. Groups from all sections of the state and from over into China kept coming for days. We had as many as 500 on the compound at once, some of whom had been traveling nearly a month. Often two groups would arrive at the same moment, one from the northwest, and another from the south. We held preaching services morning, afternoon and evening; generally two services at once, one for those who had been baptized and one for those who had not. That, with the examination of candidates, regular preaching in the bazar for Shans and the medical and school work, made the station a center of ceaseless activity. The crowds continued to come till the middle of May, when the heavy rains made travel too difficult. The result is that 1636 have been baptized up to the present date. Groups have gone all over the state and far over into China on evangelistic tours. The door is open wide and the call comes from every section, "Come over and help us."

*Mr. Ba Te, formerly a strong helper in the mission at Bassein, went with Mr. Young to Kengtung two years ago, and has assisted in whatever school work has been done and in the training of native workers. He was once a lawyer and received much larger compensation than he now has as a mission helper.

STRENGTHENING THE STAKES

During the rains attention will be directed largely to school work and the training of native evangelists. We have opened an outstation, five miles away, for special work among the northern and western Shans, and a small chapel has been erected, together with a good house for native helpers. The move is of great importance to the work on the plain. The school work for the hill people is very encouraging, and we expect an attendance of 100 very soon.

Many adults are studying with a view to active Christian work. We have just received assurance that a group of government buildings, ten miles northwest from our compound, which have been used as a sanitarium, will be given to the mission. A number of brick buildings are included, and the location at an elevation of 5,000 or 6,000 feet affords a splendid change of climate. We shall soon remove the school there. We hope to start another school in the city, for the benefit of Shans and Burmans. The hand of Providence has been clearly seen in this work all along.

LONG LOST BRETHREN FOUND

We now know with certainty that these people are closely allied to the Karens. Their traditions supplement those of the Karens, who have clear traditions of their brethren who were left behind, and whom they have longed to see for many years. The Muhsos have clear traditions that their brethren, the Karens, have gone to the south, and also a prophecy that they will return. They seem satisfied that the coming of the Karen preachers with the gospel is the fulfilment of this prophecy. The Karen workers are unanimously agreed that the Muhsos correspond closely to the Sgaw Karens; the Kwes to the Pwo Karens; and the Kaws to the Red Karens. The Karen Christians, delighted to hear that their long lost brethren are receiving the gospel, are rallying nobly to the support of this work. It will greatly increase their liberality, stir up their missionary zeal and prove a great blessing to the native Christians of Burma. Truly God moves in a "mysterious way," but there is no longer a doubt that this movement is of the Lord, and that the hill people of Kengtung and southwest China are coming to us to receive the gospel.

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